

THE FRENCH ADMINISTRATION OF INDO-CHINA

the hands of the Chinese mandarins, who, among other vexatious measures, forbade them freedom to worship. The atrocious struggle lasted sixteen years: it ravaged the country and decimated the population. It has been estimated that a million men perished on the Chinese side alone. The cruelty with which the war was conducted by both combatants has been noted by many eye-witnesses. In 1873 *C&M* *he fall of Talifou, the last Moslem stronghold. The revolt was crushed, but Yunnan was left ruined. Jean Dupuis was not a little responsible for the ultimate Chinese victory by the arms and munitions he rushed through to them by the Red River route, for the Chinese government was badly handicapped by the simultaneous Taiping rebellion. The war left the Yunnanese with the habit of pillage, and this was incidentally responsible for prolonging Tonkin's pacification.

Ferry's war with China was an accident, the denial of France's traditional policy of reinforcing Chinese independence as a counterpoise to English and Russian expansion. Moreover, Chinese culture has always exercised a fascination over the French mind. Part of the confusion in the negotiations, and the mistakes which led up to the war, were due to a diplomacy between Paris and Peking that ignored Indo-Chinese officialdom. The latter were less influenced by Metropolitan politics, and also far better informed about Indo-China's best interests. A little later Gallieni was to prove, for the regulation of Yunnanese problems, the superiority of direct dealings with local officials.

With the termination of hostilities, both in China and Tonkin, a commercial interest in Yunnan was reborn. The axis of

the mercantile world was shifting rapidly towards the Pacific. In 1897, the Lyon Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with other French cities, sent a commission to study Yunnan, Kwang-Si, and Tonkin's commercial possibilities. Their report was the first authoritative account which exploded the legend of Yunnan's immediately utilizable wealth: the shortage of labour and general insecurity there prevented tapping that province's mineral resources. The Moslem revolt had revealed the progressive weakening of the Peking government, and had aroused the anti-foreign feeling which was to have repercussions all over the Celestial Empire. In June 1899, the French Consulate at Mongtzeu was burned, and a month later Europeans were forced out of that province for almost a year. This state of affairs greatly hampered Doumer's railway projects in Yunnan, for which France had **got** Peking's consent in the 1885 treaty. This railway was only a part of